

PHOTO: Rothman Commemorates the Armenian Genocide

For Immediate Release: May 3, 2006

Contact: Kimberly Allen, (202) 226-8364; (202) 420-1524 [cell]

Rothman Commemorates the Armenian Genocide

Read his Remarks in the Congressional Record Commemorating the 91st Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

(Washington, DC)—Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) joined the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) on Wednesday, April 26 to commemorate the 91st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In his address, Rothman spoke passionately about the failure of the international community to hold Turkey and the Ottoman Empire accountable for the Armenian Genocide.

“As a Jewish American, I understand the horrors of genocide and the danger that comes from denial. As we know, international failure to recognize genocide of the kind that took place in Armenia contributed to a mindset that led to the Holocaust. Hitler said, ‘Who remembers the Armenians?’ The notion that such horrific brutality and slaughter upon a community can go unrecognized caused an atmosphere where others thought they might be able to accomplish the same without retribution, without punishment, by the world body,” said Rothman.

Earlier in the week, on Sunday, April 23, Rothman joined the New Jersey Chapter of ANCA in Ridgefield, NJ for a commemoration event at the Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church. He entered his remarks on the commemoration into the Congressional Record. They are included below in their entirety:

Congressman Steven R. Rothman

Extension of Remarks

Commemorating the 91st Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

April 26, 2006

Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues in commemorating the 91st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and remembering the death of 1.5 million Armenians during the years 1915-1923.

We have witnessed a reprehensible ninety-one years of denial by the international community of one of the most horrific crimes against humankind, the systematic and planned extermination of an entire ethnic group. The failure of the

international community to hold the Ottoman Empire accountable for the Armenian Genocide initiated a cycle of genocide that continues to this day in Darfur, where an estimated 400,000 people have died and 2.5 million people have been displaced from their homes.

Turkey's persistent denial of their predecessor government's responsibility for the Armenian Genocide sets a dangerous precedent that makes future genocides more likely. In fact, many of the tactics employed by the Ottoman Empire against the defenseless Armenian population are now being used in Darfur today — forced exile, systematic deprivation of food and water, and murder through starvation. If the cycle is to end, there must be accountability for genocide. This is why it is critical that the U.S. government officially recognize the Armenian Genocide and also, pressure Turkey to end its campaign of genocide denial. Genocide denial is the last stage of genocide and what Elie Wiesel has termed to be a "double killing"; The United States cannot remain silent as this "double killing" continues every day through Turkey's multi-million dollar worldwide campaign to suppress the teaching of the Armenian Genocide.

I stand united with Armenians and Armenian-Americans in my district and around the country who continue to fight for recognition of the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide so the world will never forget the first crime against humanity in the 20th Century. And I promise to continue to stand firm against the efforts of those who deny the Armenian Genocide.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

###